

Online & Social Marketing

CONTACT: Steve Wild COO | email: steve.wild@virtualfestivals.com

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Marketing festivals in the digital age:

Selling tickets

“Only 3% claim they are convinced to buy through traditional advertising campaigns”

Festival Census 2010

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Online is the medium of choice:

- **Festival fans are music fans**
- **Music is THE entertainment property that engages**
**“55% of festival fans spend over 10 hours a week online
per week”**
 - **Rumours**
 - **News**
 - **Opinion**
 - **Communicate**
 - **Involved**

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Online consumption:

- **Websites**
- **Social communities**

“25% use FaceBook regularly (YouTube 20%)”

Platforms:

- **Computer**
- **Mobile**

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- **FaceBook community phenomena:**

‘myspace and FaceBook announce Mashup partnership’

- **Login to FaceBook through the site**
 - **Connect and engage**
 - **Profiling**

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Key is Relevancy, Interest & Engagement:

What prompts you to buy a ticket?

- **1. I buy the day they go on sale - (31.6%)**
- **2. Friends are buying theirs - (18.3%)**
- **3. It's payday - (10.6%)**
- **4. Advertising campaign - (3.2%)**
- **5. Early-bird offer - (21.7%)**
- **6. Media preview/review - (3.2%)**
- **7. Recommendation from someone I trust - (6.3%)**
- **8. It's close to selling out - (5.1%)**

Total: 3064

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Festival types:

- **Immediate sell out**
- **Eventual sell out**
- **Non sell out**

The same Marketing Mix:

- **Website**
- **Forums**
- **Social networks**
- **Advertising**
- **Promotions**
- **Teamers**

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Route to success:

- **Inform**
- **Engage**
- **Involve**
- **Transact**

“only 18% of fans go directly to festival websites for information”

DATABASE

DATABASE

DATABASE

Yours or Partners

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Festival focused properties:

“19% of internet users head to official festival websites to get festival information, but dedicated festival sites are the most common destination of choice for over a third of fans”

Generic festival portals:

- **Sell outs need engagement and connection**
- **Non sell outs need reach**
 - **Editorial**
 - **Advertising**
 - **Promos**
 - **Content**
 - **Ticketing**

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The Festival Hub

Digital, Social Media & Experiential Community



If you want to be reach the festival going audience
then Virtual Festivals is a must have partner

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User Stats:

"Users spend 4 times longer on Virtual Festivals than our nearest competitor"
(ComScore)

- **2 Million+ Unique Users per year**
(Google Analytics)
- **1 Million+ page impressions per month**
- **Average time on site: 12.3 minutes**
- **Even gender split - 53% female**
- **150,000+ opt-in email subscribers**
- **upto 40% open rate for emails**
- **130,000+ pages indexed in Google**
- **69% are 17-35 years old**

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About Virtual Festivals:

- **Established in 1999**
- **A leading online live music destination**
- **A social platform hub**
- **Successfully aggregating the entire festival marketplace**
- **Sponsor of both the UK and European Festival Awards**
- **Influence and credibility within the festival industry**
- **Syndicating festival content to major print publications**

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Music Week

3 Page Tribute to Virtual Festivals

“It is the definitive website for festival information and the vast majority of festival-goers know it as that,”
Stuart Galbraith – CEO Kilimanjaro

“Virtual Festivals is great. It’s a fundamental part of the industry now so keep up the good work”
John Probyn – COO Live Nation UK

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Features



26.09.09 Music Week 17

VIRTUAL VISION

From bedroom enterprise to a key live industry resource, Virtual Festivals celebrates 10 years of business...

Live

By Christopher Barrett



LAUNCHED OSTENSIBLY AS A MEANS BY WHICH TO ACCURE FREE ENTRY to festivals, pioneering events portal Virtual Festivals has evolved from a one-man operation into a key industry resource for the UK and European festival markets.

Back in 1999 when fresh-faced junior web developer Steve Jenner first exercised his entrepreneurial spirit and launched the Virtual Festivals website (VF) with details of no more than six UK events, he could not possibly have envisaged the phenomenal growth that both the festival market and his fledgling initiative would enjoy over the coming decade.

Now, having generated successful side projects including the annual UK Festival Awards, the UK Festival Conference and expanded into the burgeoning European festival market with Virtual Festivals Europe, VF lists no less than 388 contemporary UK music festivals that attract an audience of approximately 3m people.

From the outset a key aim of Jenner's was to build a reliable and trusted online brand that would not only unite festivals but the millions of eager fans visiting festivals each year. With so many events in the marketplace, for many festival-goers the VF site quickly became an essential way of navigating their way through the array of choice on offer.

"The industry has grown as a result of being connected," says Jenner. "When I launched VF it was a keen festival-goer that was tremendously frustrated by the lack of facilities available online. Now all the organisers are very much in touch with the fans, they speak to them, they listen to them, and that has really catalysed the explosive growth in the festival market."

Kilimanjaro chief executive Stuart Galbraith, who has been a key player in the establishment of an array of festivals over the past decade including Download, Hyde Park Calling, Wireless, Wilderness, Bloodstock and Sonisphere, regards the Virtual Festival site as an invaluable way of communicating, and selling tickets, to his festivals' audience.

"It is the definitive website for festival information and the vast majority of festival-goers know it as that," says Galbraith.

"We have the biggest targeted database of festival-goers in the UK, about 100,000. It's the most cost-effective way of getting to a large audience," says Jenner.

But back in 1999, when running VF during his spare time in the evenings and at weekends, the business model looked very different with Jenner's main priority being the acquisition of free tickets to the festivals he loved such as Glastonbury and Reading. But buoyed by the dot.com boom Jenner soon found his website evolving into a business - and one that was gaining traction at a remarkable rate. As VF's user numbers soared so banner advertising started to flow in.

"The launch coincided with an explosion in festival numbers and it soon became apparent that there were a lot of people out there who, like me, wanted to find out more about what festivals had to offer," says Jenner, who for many years single-handedly ran the operation.

"I did all the editorial, development and a lot of the photography," says Jenner who quickly realised that numerous like-minded individuals would be happy to offer gratis assistance in return for festival tickets.

Now with Virtual Festivals housed in an office in London's West End with six permanent staff and a number of interns and freelancers, Jenner has raised an army of around 200 contributors. "Many of them are professional writers who do it for the love," says Jenner.

Over the years VF has managed to survive a series of dot.com crashes by adjusting its business model from one that was based on advertising revenue to one with a focus on sponsorship before switching to B2B marketing support. Along the way Jenner points out that his business has received not a penny of outside investment.

"It has been purely organic, just good old sweat and blood, he laughs. Ten years on and that toil and those secretions have certainly paid off. One of the latest developments and one that Jenner is particularly proud of is the introduction of VF's personal recommendation technology as an integral part of the new Festival Matchmaker facility. "It looks at all the music on your iPod then points you to a festival that best matches your musical taste," he enthuses. "There are so many festivals of all shapes and sizes, it can be quite an intimidating market place to come to as a fan."

While Jenner is also excited by the growth of the Virtual

Live leaders' 10 years of festivals

JAMES BARTON, CEO, Cream
"Ten years ago festivals were popular but not as popular as they are now... they're a part of British culture. The biggest consequence is there is a lot more competition out there now and the space is a lot harder to obtain."

MED/IN BENN, director, Festival Republic
"In 1,000, between Reading and Leeds we probably sold 65,000 tickets and this year, between the weekend tickets and the day tickets, we sold in excess of 200,000 tickets. So I guess, using this as a marker of the 10 years, the market is probably about three times stronger now than it was then."

JOHN PROBYN, chief operating officer, Live Nation
"Artist fees have gone sky high and the public have become more aware of the surroundings and the facilities, and they demand more. Ten years ago, you could get away with an awful lot. You can't these days. They want more."

VINCE POWER, founder, Vinca Power Music Group
"It doesn't seem to be as creative anymore in my opinion, apart from one or two promoters like Got Your Own Fans. All the good bands got grabbed up by the big companies who say, 'if you don't come with us you won't be doing any festivals.'"

STUART GALBRAITH, Chief executive, Kilimanjaro Live
"Festivals have become a rite of passage - you finish your exams, leave school and go to festivals. And now what you've got is the industry starting to capture customers from as early as the age of 10, with festivals like Underage and Camp Bestival, all the way through to 40-, 50-, 60-year-olds..."

Virtual Festivals Europe site which he points out is a reflection of the European festival market undergoing the kind of boom that the UK market enjoyed just a few years ago, another key priority for Jenner and his team is the UK Festival Awards. Now in its fourth year, the award ceremony will take place on November 19 at IndigO2 and will for the second year be preceded during the day by the UK Festival Conference. Pleased last year with 70 delegates at London's Gibson Rooms, the conference will this year open its doors to no less than 800 delegates.

"Looking back over the past decade, Jenner's bedroom enterprise has evolved into a thriving international operation that much like the industry it has attempted to unite is one of the music business' real success stories.

"Back then it wasn't considered an industry, but the festival business has really exploded over the years. The internet and what we have done with VF has played a key role in unifying festival organisers and festival-goers," says Jenner.



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Refreshing VF:

– New focus

- **Ticketing**
- **Video**
- **Increased Social Networking**
- **Street teams**

Increasing users, their activity and repeat visits

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Giving the fans a...

‘better festival experience’

More content

More engaging

More value

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Better connected:

- **myspace festival partner**
 - **live performance content**
- **Cadbury Trident**
 - **Perpetual Festival**
- **National Express**
 - **Travel partner**



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Be part of it:

- **Update your listings**
- **Announce your news**
- **Invest some budget**
- **Special offers**
- **Sell your tickets**
- **Share your content**

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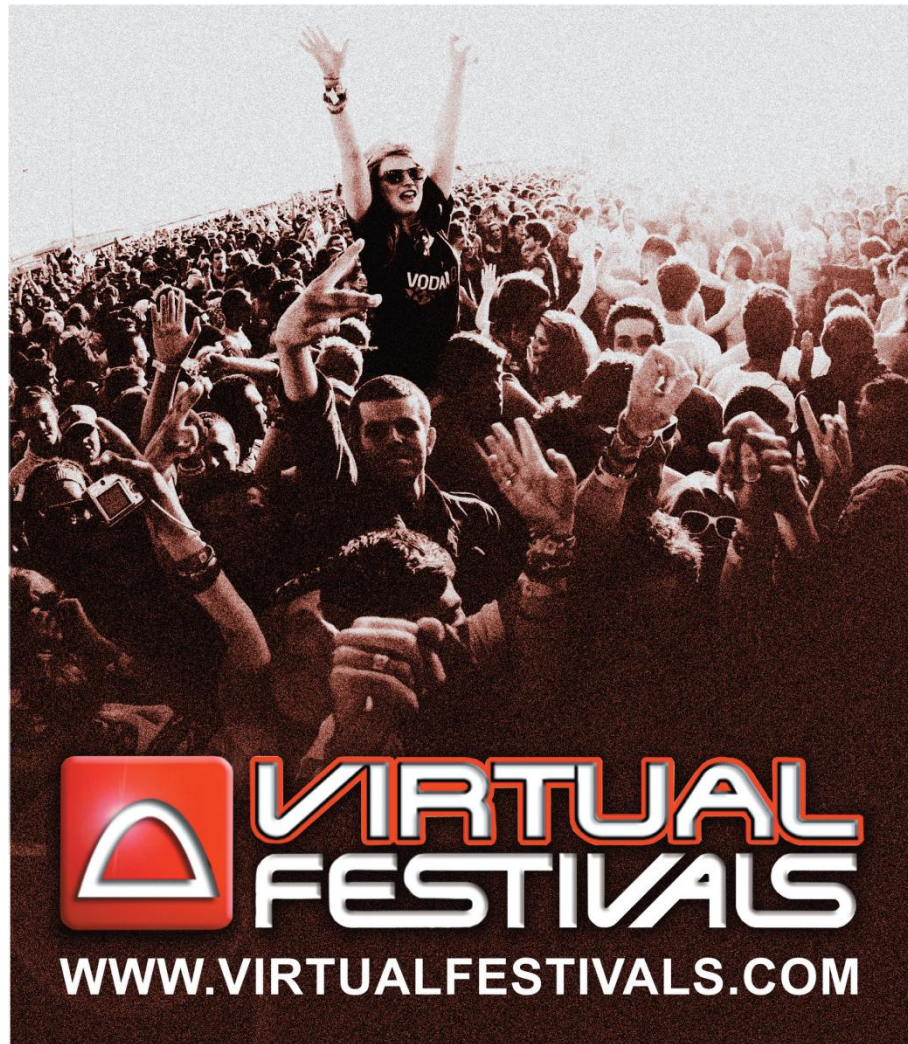
Get more:

Digital Solutions

- Website creation / hosting
- Forums management
- Bespoke Mobile app
- Video and photo generation
- Video player integration

+ on the ground solutions (content creation & press)

+ research



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